

LOWER CONNECTICUT RIVER VALLEY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING

November 25, 2013

Members:

Chester: Sally Murray *
Clinton: Alan Kravitz *
Rodney Kirouac *
Cromwell:
Deep River: Bruce Edgerton *
Durham: Frank DeFelice *
Joe Pasquale *
East Haddam: Crary Brownell *
Lou Salicrup
East Hampton: Mark Philhower
Meg Wright *
Essex: Frank Hall
Alan Kerr *
Haddam: Stasia DeMichele
Raul deBrigard *
Killingworth: James K. O'Brien *
Stephanie Warren *
Lyme: David Tiffany
Phyllis Ross
Middlefield: Robert Johnson
Middletown: Beth Emery *
Molly Salafia * (7:25)
Old Lyme: Steven Ross
Harold Thompson
Old Saybrook: Dr. Cathryn Flanagan *
Karen Jo Marcolini *
Portland: Betty Jenak
Michael Woronoff
Westbrook: Bill Neale
Marie Farrell

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TOWN CLERK
MIDDLETOWN, CONN.

* Members Present

Lower Connecticut River Valley Regional Planning Commission
Minutes of the November 25, 2013 Meeting
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Staff Present:

Linda Krause
Judy Snyder
Torrance Downes

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman DeFelice called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

The members introduced themselves and attendance was taken.

3. SEATING OF ALTERNATES

Alternate Meg Wright was seated for East Hampton member Mark Philhower.

4. AMENDMENTS TO AGENDA

There were no amendments to the agenda.

5. APPROVE THE AGENDA

Upon motion of Sally Murray, seconded by Cathy Flanagan, it was unanimously voted to approve the agenda.

6. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Frank DeFelice asked if anyone from the public wished to speak. There was no one at this time.

7. REFERRALS

- a. Colchester, Zoning regulations and map restructure

Torrance Downes presented the referral from the town of Colchester (Attachment 1). The town is proposing to merge the existing R60 and R80 zones into a "Rural" zone in which conditions for conventional and conservation building lots would be more stringent. The members were concerned that the increase of frontage for lot requirements would affect the paved roads and surface areas for runoff. Mr. Downes will compose a letter to the Colchester Planning and Zoning Commission stating these concerns.

It was determined that this proposed change would not negatively impact the abutting towns of East Hampton and East Haddam.

8. DISCUSSION OF DRAFT MISSION STATEMENT

Linda Krause distributed the "Proposed Mission Statement for the Lower Connecticut River Valley Regional Planning Commission" (Attachment 2) and explained to the members the function of the statement. This statement, when approved, will be incorporated into the COG by-laws.

Upon motion of Crary Brownell, seconded by Raul deBrigard, it was voted to remove "as the LCRVCOG requests" in the first paragraph and approve the Mission Statement.

9. POCD

a. Outreach – Ten Questions

Linda Krause distributed "Ten Questions for Local Planning Commissions" (Attachment 3). These questions will be presented by COG staff members at a town meeting of each local planning commission and are intended to start a dialog between the commissioners and the COG. The COG staff will explain the functions of the COG and purpose of writing a regional plan. It is the intent of these meetings to involve the planning commissions in the process of developing a plan with their thought and ideas for the town and the region. Beth Emery and Jim O'Brien asked if these questions could be placed on the River COG website for review before the planning meetings begin.

b. Data Collection - Status

Linda Krause distributed a revised draft of the content structure (Attachment 4). This is a list of topics to be included in the plan. Ms. Krause said that there are other resources to be used in the collection of data such as the Conway School which has agreed to research the feasibility of connecting and using the Valley Railroad for freight and passenger service. Interns are also working with the COG collecting data to determine the amount of industrial land available and a list of restaurants in each town. Ms. Krause said the COG would like to participate in land use classes at the COG for members of town land use boards. These classes are useful, not only for new members, but as a refresher for existing members. The extension service land use academy is interested in holding classes at the COG office.

Beth Emery asked if this is a final for the ten questions or if additional information will be added. Ms. Krause stated she will revise the list and e-mail it to the members. The hope is that in January the process can begin in the towns. A discussion of transportation issues will be scheduled for the RPC meeting in January. The COG has an abundant of data for this section.

c. Other

Frank DeFelice stated that he is scheduled on the February COG agenda to update the members on the progress of the RPC.

10. STAFF REPORT

There were no items at this time.

11. DISCUSS APPOINTMENT OF NOMINATING COMMITTEE FOR ELECTION OF OFFICERS – JANUARY 2014 MEETING

Frank DeFelice asked if anyone wished to serve as chairman for the coming year. There being no response, he stated that the present slate of officers could be re-elected in January unless there were nominations from the floor at that time. The present officers are:

Chairman – Frank DeFelice
Vice-Chairman – Raul deBrigard
Secretary – Sally Murray

12. APPROVAL OF OCTOBER 28, 2013 MINUTES

Frank DeFelice asked for approval of the November 28th minutes.

Upon motion of Sally Murray, seconded by Cathy Flanagan, it was unanimously voted to approve the LCRVRPC minutes of the October 28, 2013 meeting.

13. APPROVAL OF 2014 MEETING DATES

Upon motion of Crary Brownell, seconded by Cathy Flanagan, it was unanimously voted to approve the LCRVRPC 2014 meeting dates as presented (Attachment 5).

14. MISCELLANEOUS

Beth Emery asked Ms. Krause for an update on the bike/ped committee. Ms. Emery will contact Rick Grant for information.

James O'Brien asked if handouts can be sent with the agenda. Ms. Krause stated it is not always possible, but will try to distribute before the meetings.

15. ADJOURNMENT

Upon motion of Sally Murray, seconded by Cathy Flanagan, it was unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Judith Snyder
Recording Secretary

Comparison of Proposed Merging of R-60 and R-80 into a Broader "Rural Zone"

CONCLUSION: For the rurally-designated properties that are on the borders of East Haddam and East Hampton, the proposed regulations will encourage conservation subdivisions that will be no more dense (and possibly slightly less dense) than that currently permitted. With better design criteria which supports retention of natural features, designs will be less "cookie cutter" in appearance. If conventional designs are chosen, the density will be 100% less in the former R60 Rural District and 75% less dense in the R80 Rural District.

General Description: The proposed regulations add "Conservation Subdivisions" to the proposed "Rural Zone". In that regulation, which is designed "for greater flexibility in the design of subdivisions", the lot characteristics are more akin to those that were available for what are referred to as "conventional" subdivisions. With the minimum lot size for conventional subdivisions being increased from 60,000 and 80,000sf to 120,000sf with stricter guidelines for what is "buildable", it's clear that the Colchester P&Z is promoting the use of the Conservation Subdivision as the tool of choice for division of land. **NOTE THAT PROVISION FOR NONCONFORMING COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL USES IS REMOVED AS ARE CHURCHES/WORSHIP. MANY USES, BOTH PERMITTED AND SP EX REMOVED FOR PROPOSED DISTRICT.**

Side/Rear Yard Setbacks: To accommodate the smaller minimum lot size of Conservation Subdivisions, side and rear yard setbacks are 25 feet vs. 35 feet for the larger conventional subdivision lots.

Buildable Area: Same for either subdivision type, either a square with 150 foot sides or "equivalent sized rectangle" with shortest side not less than 125 feet.

Preservation of Conservation Features: Requires that such features be maintained and preserved to the "maximum extent practicable" and as required by law. Such features include:

- (1) wetlands/watercourses,
- (2) flood plains,
- (3) historic structures,
- (4) wetland "upland review areas",
- (5) naturally occurring slopes $\geq 25\%$,
- (6) any portion of contiguous forest that is ≥ 20 acres,
- (7) statewide vegetated cover types (assorted),
- (8) potential contiguous open space or connective green belts,
- (9) locally important farmland soils, areas of recreation value defined in local plans, and
- (10) un-regulated cultural features (historic sites and structures, archaeological sites, cemeteries and scenic views).

General Design Criteria: Narrative required which addresses each objective:

- (1) preservation of existing landscaping in natural state,
- (2) street design to maintain/preserve natural topography, significant landmarks, trees; minimize cut/fill, and preserve and enhance views/vistas on or off subject parcel,
- (3) development shall relate "harmoniously" to terrain and use/scale/architecture of existing buildings in the vicinity that have functional or visual relationship to the proposed buildings,
- (4) open space on lots shall be designed to add to the visual amenities of the area by maximizing its visibility for persons passing the site or overlooking it from nearby properties,
- (5) removal or disruption of historic, traditional or significant uses, stone walls, structures or architectural elements shall be minimized whether on-site or adjacent.

Residential Yield: Subdivisions with 3 or more proposed lots or re-subdivision that results in the creation of 4 or more lots from the original parcel shall be planned according to a procedure which subtracts the area of several features/elements from TOTAL square footage of site: (1) wetlands/watercourses, (2) flood plains, (3) exposed ledge, (4) existing conservation/utility easements, (5) slopes $> 25\%$. Further reduce the calculated amount by 10% (to account for

Comparison of Proposed Merging of R-60 and R-80 into a Broader "Rural Zone"

roads/buildings), then divide by 120,000 square feet in Conventional Subdivisions and 80,000 square feet in Conservation Subdivisions.

	Existing R60	Existing R80	Proposed "Rural"
Min Lot Size	60,000	80,000	120,000 Conventional 80,000 Conservation
Frontage	250 arterial/collector 150 local/dead end	300 arterial/collector 200 local/dead end	350 arterial/collector 300 local or dead end
Setbacks	Front: 75' collector/art 50 elsewhere	Front: 100' coll/art 50' elsewhere	Greater, with variations based upon existing trees or cleared ROW
Lot Coverage	10%	7.5%	12% [20% non-residential uses]
Density	0.35 lots per acre of buildable area	0.50 lots per acre of buildable area	Lot Yield*
Permitted	Single Family Ag Uses (8.10) Horticultural Seasonal Roadside Stds Public Rec Areas Accessory Bldgs Home Occupations Comm/Ind in existence prior to 12/12/2003		Single Family Two-family Ag Uses (8.10) Home Occupations Outdoor Memb Clubs Day Care COMPLIANT with state stds
Special Exception	Churches/Worshp Riding Stables Day Nursery/Kindrgrtn Country Clubs Seasonal Boardng Cmps Excavation Golf Course Heliport/Air Strip Cemeteries Kennels/Comm Kennels Educational B&B Accessory Apts Retreat Center Wireless Tele Site Town Hall/Public Comm/Ind 12/12/2003 Public Utility	Churches/Worship Riding Stables Country Clubs Seasonal Boardng Camps Educational Accessory Apts Expnsn/Mod of Comm/Ind per 12/12/2003 Public Utility (including sewerage pump stations, power switching, water storage tanks)	Commercial Kennel Accessory Apts B&B Golf Course Institutional and Municipal Land Uses Day Care that EXCEEDS State standards Educational

PROPOSED

MISSION STATEMENT

For the

LOWER CONNECTICUT RIVER VALLEY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

The mission of the Lower Connecticut River Valley Regional Planning Commission is to assist and advise the Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments in such planning matters ~~"as the LCRVCOG requests"~~, in accordance with the Connecticut General Statutes and the By-laws of the LCRVCOG. (TAKE out)

The Regional Planning Commission shall develop a draft Regional Plan of Conservation and Development, as described in State Statutes, for consideration by the LCRVCOG. The RPC will review and update the Plan as needed in order to reflect the changing conditions within and beyond the Region, and will submit such updates to the LCRVCOG for action.

The Regional Planning Commission will review, assess and comment on municipal and regional impacts of land use decisions which are referred to the LCRVCOG by law, and on other such matters as may be referred to it for review.

The Regional Planning Commission shall serve as a conduit for information to and from municipal planning commissions within the Region on land use matters and other activities affecting the region.

LCRV REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

TEN QUESTIONS FOR LOCAL PLANNING COMMISSIONS (discussion draft 11/25/13) LK)

What regional issues are of concern and interest to you? What do you see as your town's role in the Lower Connecticut River Valley Region?

- **(Transportation)** The Region is hardwired to be dependent on private automobiles . As the cost of gasoline climbs and the cost of owning a vehicle increases, how will we get around. Young people may not be able to afford a car, and elderly people may no longer be able to or comfortable with driving. What should our future transportation system be?
- **(Shopping)** Where do we get our goods, food, services? How is this changing and what are the land use implications?
- **(Work)** Where do we work and what do we do at work? What kinds of jobs are available to regional residents? How is this changing (electronics, service jobs)?
- **(Education)** Do the work skills of regional residents match the need? What kinds of employment could use our skills? Can we do anything to improve the match?
- **(Recreation)** Is there really "nothing to do here"? Some people socialize through kids'schools and kids' sports, churches, hobby groups and such. What do we do for recreation and enrichment – does it serve the needs of all sectors of the population? Follow up: where do we get our sense of community?
- **(Health)** How good/affordable is our health system in the region? Medical access? A clean environment? Health promotion?
- **(Climate change)** How will climate change affect land use in the Region? Shore, river, inland?
- **(Energy)** Our lifestyles here are dependent on an adequate supply of affordable electricity. Where will our energy come from in the future? What are the land use implications?
- **(Housing)** Does the current housing stock meet the needs of the people who live here? Are our housing needs changing due to changing demographics and lifestyles? What will we need in the future? Will McMansions sell? How can we have affordable housing without sewers and/or public water?
- **(Waste disposal)** What do we do with our waste (water, solids, hazardous materials)
- **(Character)** What do you like/don't like about regional appearance and other aspects of our regional character? What is good (and should be preserved) and what is not good (and should be avoided or eliminated)?
- **(Taxes)** Property tax considerations often drive land use decisions. Are we over taxed? What should government do and who should pay for what?

DRAFT CONTENT STRUCTURE

1. Introduction
2. Natural Resource Conservation
 - A. Demographics (Resource)
 - B. Watersheds and Water Quality
 - C. Open Space and Farmland Preservation
 - D. Utilities
 - E. Technology and Communications
 - F. Waste Management
 - G. Water Resources
 - H. Health (Wellness, Wastewater, Drinking Water)
 - I. Emergency Management
 - J. Energy Conservation and Development
3. Economic Development
 - A. Demographics (Economic)
 - B. Land and Resource Valuation
 - C. Economic Partners
 - D. Diversity
 - E. Labor
 - F. Job Creation and Incubation Initiatives
 - G. Eco and Destination Tourism
 - H. Growth Management: Role of Town Centers and Middletown
 - I. Market Analysis
 - J. Visual Resources
 - K. Transportation
 - L. Housing
 - M. Agriculture and Food Systems
 - N. Education
 - O. Cultural Resources
4. Land Use and Zoning
 - A. Demographics
 - B. Existing Land Use Patterns
 - C. Capacity
 - D. Coastal and Waterfront Development
 - E. Farmland Preservation
 - F. Existing and Future Housing Demands
 - G. Economic Opportunities
 - H. Preferred Conservation and Development Patterns
5. Municipal Focus Areas
6. Achieving the Balance
 - A. Connecting Communities
 - B. Cultural Resources
7. Best Management Practices
8. Recommendations for Implementation